

# **S**EX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

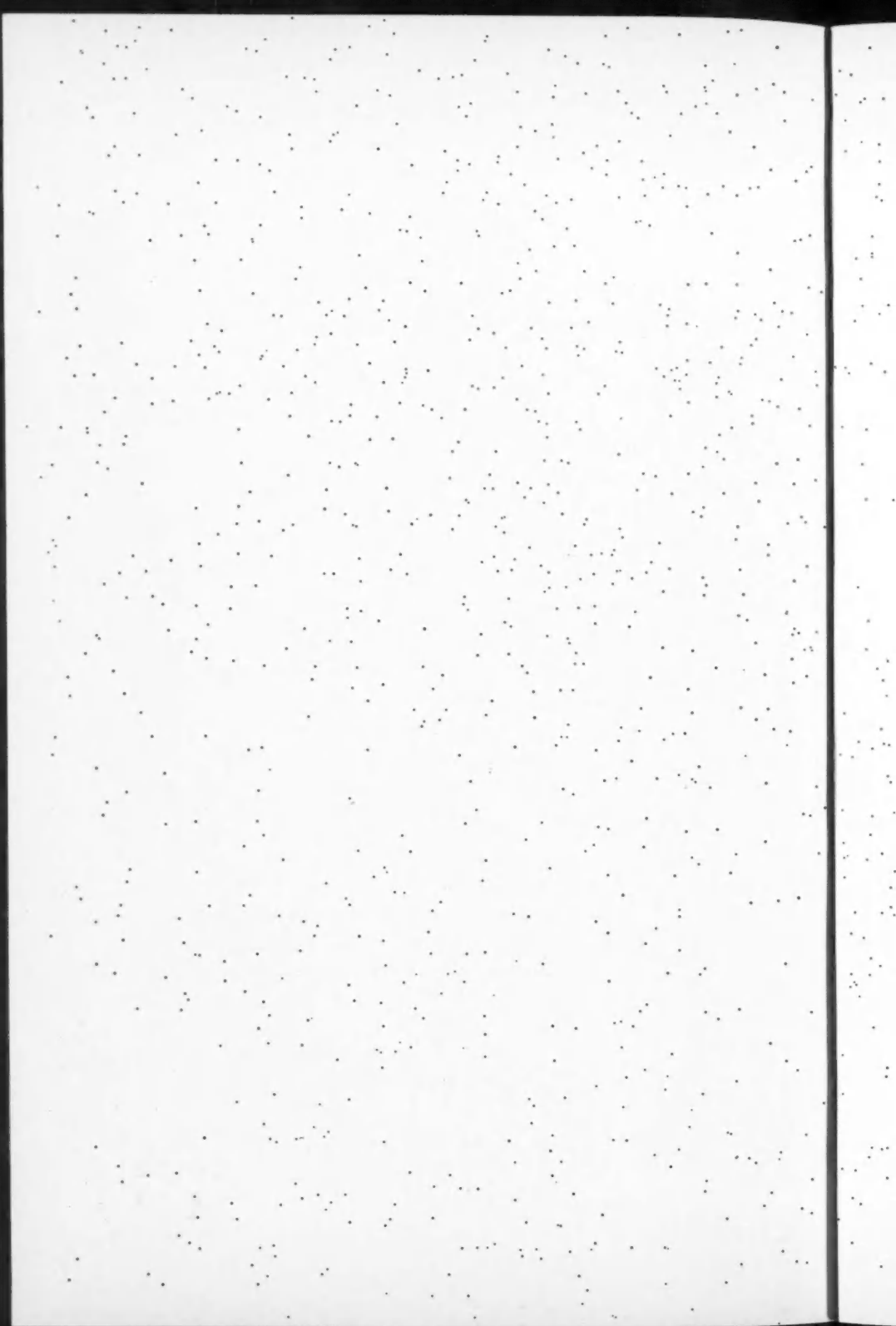
by

**Helen B. Shaffer**

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## SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

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A GROWING NUMBER of American children are learning the "facts of life" as a part of the formal education they receive in the public schools. People in general hear relatively little about sex education today because most schools do not offer it under that name. Information about sex usually is given along with instruction on numerous other subjects under the general designation of "Family Life Education." Sex teaching takes its place in the group as unobtrusively as topics like "Making and Keeping Friends" or "Spending One's Allowance Wisely."

In many schools facts about sex are slipped into the teaching of such traditional subjects as social studies, science, hygiene, home economics, or physical education. In addition, more and more senior high schools are emulating the colleges in offering courses on marriage. These are practical studies aimed to help young people make a success of marriage when the time comes.

How much useful information on sex boys and girls are acquiring through school programs is hard to determine. There is a wealth of texts on what should be taught about sex in school, but little has been done to ascertain on an over-all basis what is actually being taught and the extent to which the teaching fulfills the intended purpose. Informal observations by some authorities in the field indicate that, while sex education in the schools has become fairly prevalent, much of it still skirts around the very questions on which young people need more knowledge, understanding, and guidance.

### SLOW GROWTH OF SEX TEACHING IN THE SCHOOLS

Sex or family life education in elementary and secondary schools has been growing slowly but steadily for 30 years. Community antagonism to introduction of instruction in sex matters has gradually weakened, although it has by no

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means disappeared, while professional support for the subject has gained immeasurably. The most recent survey, conducted five years ago by Chester Lee Eggert of the University of Florida, "disposed forever of any lingering doubts about the general acceptance of family life and sex education."<sup>1</sup>

"General acceptance," however, apparently does not mean general availability of sex education in the schools. The same author has asked why, when "the whole range of our citizenry [is] strongly in favor" of family life education, it should still be "so faltering, so 'spotty,' so half-hearted a business except in a few exceptional centers." A large share of the blame has been assigned to teacher training institutions.

With parents and clergy, doctors and nurses, young people and children, teachers and school officials all of one mind—"We need it and should have it"—family life education is assured. . . . [But] the teacher training institutions have been slow to hear the cry. They have been waiting for it to grow louder, stronger, more insistent. . . . We are, it seems, caught in another of those stalemates in which no-one is ready to take a decisive step.<sup>2</sup>

Estimates of the extent of sex education in American schools are strongly influenced by the importance attached by the observer to the sex content of family life courses. In a presidential address before the National Council on Family Relations on Aug. 16, 1956, Judson T. Landis gave an optimistic report on the growth of such courses; he noted that they were being given at the college level by more than 1,100 teachers and that "family life education has also developed rapidly in the high schools." Landis pointed out that the emphasis was being placed on the "quality of the relationships" in family life rather than on rudimentary information. "We are seeing more and more," he said, "that sex facts are a very small part of essential sex education and that sex must be considered in its relationship to the total personality."

Other observers feel that emphasis on family relationships, while basically sound, has been overdone to the point of weakening sex education. Criticizing the trend toward "de-sexed" family life education, a marriage-counseling team recently commented: "Family life education has be-

<sup>1</sup> Frances Bruce Strain and Chester Lee Eggert, *Framework for Family Life Education* (1956), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-12.

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come a relatively common commodity in schools and colleges. But where, pray tell, are the clear and forthright voices on problems of sex? . . . There is . . . evidence that the passing years have brought a decline, not a rise, in boldness regarding the sexual aspects of marriage and family courses."<sup>3</sup>

### TENDENCY TO PLAY DOWN INSTRUCTION ABOUT SEX

Even where sex education has been introduced, school authorities often tend to play it down. A major obstacle encountered by Eggert in searching out current programs was the obscurity in which many sex courses were veiled. "The information," he reported, "was scattered over 48 states, hundreds of cities and towns, and tucked away unnamed and unsung in quantities of school programs—'boot-leg' efforts, at times, cautiously kept in hiding."<sup>4</sup>

Numerous school authorities accept sex education as a legitimate function of the schools but think it more wholesome for all concerned not to over-emphasize the subject in the curriculum. They feel that information and guidance on sex should reach a child in the general course of the educational process, and that sex education so handled will help to inculcate proper attitudes toward sex in the child as he grows older.

There is also continuing fear among educators that too much discussion of the sex content of a school curriculum will stir up protests. Experience has taught that it takes only a handful of outraged parents to bring about hasty termination of a sex course. Although such courses have weathered storms of criticism in some schools, and although opponents sometimes have been won over when the purpose and nature of sex education have been explained, certain schoolmen think that such controversies themselves have detrimental effects on the students.

The same reticence which makes school officials seek to avoid publicity about sex teaching acts also as a deterrent to inclusion of such material in the curriculum in the first place. Eggert found that fear of public criticism was one of the chief reasons given by superintendents for absence of sex education in their schools.

<sup>3</sup> Robert A. and Frances R. Harper, "Are Educators Afraid of Sex?" *Marriage and Family Living*, August 1957, p. 240.

<sup>4</sup> Strain and Eggert, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

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### EVIDENCE OF POPULAR DEMAND FOR SEX EDUCATION

There is considerable evidence that many school authorities are more timorous about public opinion than facts warrant. A number of administrators, after taking tentative steps to introduce sex education into their schools, have found to their surprise that the community was eager and grateful for the move. A report on a research project in teacher training for family life education said:

The danger [of community opposition] is much more serious in anticipation than in actuality. There is probably much less danger of community disapproval in family life education than in the teaching of controversial topics in the social studies fields, e.g., the treatment of political issues, the nature of Communism, or differences among religious sects and beliefs.<sup>5</sup>

This view is corroborated by many specialists with practical experience in the family life education movement. The marriage counselors previously cited have stated that "Our experience in many community situations sustains our belief that parent and public opposition to sex education is almost always exaggerated and almost always a rationalization of educators who themselves wish to avoid the problems of building or maintaining an emotionally sound family education program in their schools." It was suggested that school authorities who hastily drop the subject at the first sound of protest actually share the prejudices and the "emotional anxieties" about sex of the protesters.<sup>6</sup>

It is a rare educator who launches a sex education program of any depth without first making sure that the community will back him up. Frequently initiative for sex education in the schools comes from the community at large rather than from the school. Parent-teacher groups, local health or mental hygiene agencies, professional societies, civic and women's clubs, and church groups often participate in the early planning for sex education programs both in and out of public schools.

A family life teacher who studied a number of outstanding programs in American schools found that, in the typical instance, sex education in a school develops slowly as an ever-widening circle of community groups become interested supporters. "Program patterns sometimes evolve so

<sup>5</sup> Curtis E. Avery and Lester A. Kirkendall, *The Oregon Developmental Center Project in Family Life Education* (1955), p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> Robert A. and Frances R. Harper, "Are Educators Afraid of Sex?" *Marriage and Family Living*, August 1957, p. 242.

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gradually or assume forms differing so widely from the first conception that presently the simple, unheralded beginnings may be overlooked as unrelated or forgotten completely."<sup>7</sup>

The early stages of initiating a sex education program are said to be the most critical, and wise administrators make haste slowly. They need to maneuver carefully among the many interested groups and resist undue pressure both from opponents and from "well-meaning but overzealous" supporters of sex education. They have to prepare the teaching staff for the program, provide in-service training for some teachers, and take into consideration the views of religious denominations on the subject.

The Washington, D.C., school superintendent was criticized recently for not taking action to strengthen sex education in local schools while awaiting the recommendations of a special committee appointed a year earlier. When the committee, composed of community leaders and school officers, reported on Oct. 16, it gave "enthusiastic endorsement" to introduction of a full-fledged program of sex education to begin in kindergarten classes and extend through senior high school; specific recommendations on the nature and content of courses were included in the report.<sup>8</sup>

### LACK OF STRONG LEAD FROM EDUCATIONAL GROUPS

Agencies of educational leadership have engaged in relatively little active promotion of sex education on a national or state-wide basis. Although the professional organizations have been devoting considerable attention to problems of curriculum revision, their formal meetings to discuss that topic have hardly touched on the question of incorporating sex instruction into the basic school curriculum. Most of the national professional organizations at one time or another have indicated approval of instruction in sex matters. For the most part, however, the form and direction of sex education are developing out of the trial-and-error experiences of local schools.

Two departments of the National Education Association<sup>9</sup> took cognizance of growing school interest in sex education by putting out last year a publication entitled *Frame-*

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth McHose, *Family Life Education in School and Community* (1952), p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> The proposals are to be considered by the D.C. Board of Education in November.

<sup>9</sup> The American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, and the National Association of Secondary-School Principals.

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*work for Family Life Education.* This small book consists largely of Eggert's findings and additional material on teaching methods and curriculum content. It was published primarily for school administrators and teachers who might find it useful "to implement new as well as established programs in matters of organization, teacher-training and techniques."<sup>10</sup>

The American Social Hygiene Association has taken the lead in promoting sex education for four decades. It sponsors workshops for teachers, issues educational materials, and has conducted research in teacher training in sex education. The National Council on Family Relations, organized in 1938 to bring together researchers, teachers, and professional workers in this field, holds annual conferences which include sessions on the problems of teaching sex in the schools.

<sup>10</sup> Carl A. Troester, Jr., "Foreword," Strain and Eggert, *op. cit.*, p. 2.



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## Sex Education and Moral Guidance

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SEX EDUCATION of the young is undertaken primarily to guide boys and girls toward acceptance of the attitudes and behavior patterns which accord with the prevailing moral standards of the society in which they live. Sex education of some kind has been necessary in all social orders for "there is a strong hereditary drive toward sexual functioning but no instinctive mechanism for control or regulation of sexual impulses."<sup>11</sup> Victorian society hoped to hold youth to its moral code by shielding it from knowledge of sex as long as possible and by discouraging discussion of sex problems. A similar objective is sought in the present outspoken age by clearly expounding the facts of sex to the young and by inviting open discussion of the sex problems of youth.

Virtually every statement of purpose of sex education enunciated by agencies engaged in it reflects the fundamental motive of helping young people to adapt their primitive impulses to the demands of a social ideal, the monogamous family unit. A pamphlet in a sex education series, sponsored by a joint committee of the National Education Association and the American Medical Association, contains a typical statement of this kind:

Sex education clearly involves much more than telling the facts of life. Some authorities believe that sex education is only as good as the attitudes it develops in children and youth about family life, marriage, babies, their own bodies, the way love is expressed, and members of the other sex. Sound attitudes in such matters encourage sex conduct that brings the rewards of self-respect, the likelihood of mutual happiness in marriage, and healthy family life.<sup>12</sup>

Ideally, it is generally agreed, parents should be the ones to impart sex information to their children and try to develop wholesome attitudes in the youngsters. In practice, however, it is also generally agreed, many parents are all too likely to botch the job.

The movement for organized sex education originated early in the 20th century with the medical profession. The doctors were primarily interested in bringing venereal dis-

<sup>11</sup> M. A. Bigelow, "Sex Education and Sex Ethics," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (Vol. 14, 1934), p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Marion O. Lerrigo and Helen Southard, *Facts Aren't Enough* (1955), p. 10.

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ease under control by warning the public of the sources of infection. Special societies were formed by reformers who felt strongly that ignorance of sex was at the root of the so-called social disease problem. Sex education thus entered the schools in the form of warning lectures in which moral strictures against sexual incontinence were bolstered by descriptions of the physical consequences which might befall the sinner.

The negative tone of this early form of sex education went out of favor upon popularization of scientific (and some pseudo-scientific) theories on the relationship of sex to development of a well-balanced personality. The emphasis shifted from the physical penalties of immoral conduct to the satisfactions to be gained from a normal sex life.

As personality disorders began to supplant contagious diseases as the major school health problem, the schools became increasingly interested in the "life adjustment" goal of public education. This meant that a school should not only teach a child basic knowledge and skills; it should also train him to become a well-balanced individual, prepared to meet the demands of everyday living with competence, with understanding of the needs of others, and with the additional qualifications needed to carry on a well-ordered family life. Thus sex education became swallowed up in family life education, and its moral purpose merged with that of mental hygiene.

A leading educator in the field of family life education cites the following among benefits for youth in frank instruction on sex: "Freedom from undue and unnecessary worries . . . [helping the boy or girl to] judge, accept, and reject things they hear . . . self-confidence among associates . . . aid in making sex a contributing factor to a rounded life."<sup>18</sup>

#### FACTORS ENCOURAGING GROWTH OF SEX EDUCATION

Much of the impetus behind the spread of sex education in the schools is traceable to fears of adults that modern youth is not accepting traditional values in sexual morality. The same forces which removed taboos against sex teaching in public schools also opened up other avenues of sex "education." Even without formal teaching of the subject, or any heart-to-heart talks with parents, the average child is

<sup>18</sup> Lester A. Kirkendall, "Sex Education," *N.E.A. Journal*, December 1961.

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bound to seep up a lot of information, or misinformation, about sex. Much of this knowledge is derived in ways that hardly contribute to the development of approved attitudes toward sex.

Among factors often cited as contributing to the loosening of moral restraints on youth are increased use of the automobile, social drinking, emphasis on sex in mass media, the near-conquest of venereal diseases by medical science, and wide dissemination of birth control information.

Sex education is often put forward as an aid to reducing juvenile delinquency. The youth advisory committee of the Maryland Commission for the Prevention and Treatment of Juvenile Delinquency included in recent recommendations a proposal for high school family living courses which would stress religious and moral aspects of home life as well as information on health, personal hygiene, marriage and parenthood. Proponents of sex teaching in the District of Columbia assert that the relatively large number of unwed mothers among school-age girls in Washington "shows that there is a desperate need of classes in sex education."<sup>14</sup>

A sociologist, pleading for more extensive instruction in sex matters, said last year:

Considerable social and moral equilibrium is apparently being lost in the realm of sexual behavior. We are perilously near bankrupting the romantic love tradition as a basis for marriage. The proliferation of family welfare services, institutions and foster home programs for children, marriage counseling services and the like give eloquent testimony to the need for family life education.

Failure to provide such education "leaves youth to muddle through their dating and courtship experiences and launches thousands of couples on the sea of matrimony . . . without the most elementary skills needed to make a success of their marriage."<sup>15</sup>

### ROLES OF HOME AND SCHOOL IN GIVING FACTS ON SEX

Expansion of sex education in the classroom is symptomatic of the modern tendency to delegate to the school various functions which used to be considered solely the responsibility of the home, or of the home and the church

<sup>14</sup> William Benedict of the District of Columbia Social Hygiene Association, Sept. 5, 1957.

<sup>15</sup> Haskell M. Miller, "Family Life Education in Schools and Colleges," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, December 1956, p. 174.

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combined. The fact that sex education has had a slow and spotty growth attests to the strength of the view that home is the best place for the sex lesson.

A statement of principles worked out by a subcommittee of the American Social Hygiene Association in 1947 is widely accepted in support of sex teaching in the schools:

Since the home has the child during his most formative years, it is in the best position to make this phase of education a natural part of the day-by-day process of growth and development. But as the child's environment expands beyond the home, he meets an increasing number of questions and problems with sex connotations. There is a responsibility on the part of various community agencies, such as the church, the school and the group work agencies, to share with the home the continuing education of the child in this general field.

A pamphlet sponsored by the American Medical Association and the National Education Association says in relation to sex education of children in the 9-12 age group: "Parents and teachers have agreed that both school and home have an essential role to play in helping children learn the basic facts of human growth, including those about sex. . . . Children benefit when some of their learning comes through group situations at school as well as in the privacy of intimate parent-child discussions." The authors of the pamphlet contend that the experience of learning about sex in a group tends to decrease "unwholesome secretiveness, curiosity and gossip among the children."<sup>16</sup>

One reason for giving the schools responsibility in this field is that many parents feel unable to handle the assignment themselves. Some have inhibitions about discussing sex with their children; others admit that they can't answer all the technical questions the children bring up. A sociologist has noted that "The school with its formal educative processes is the one logical agency to which society must turn for relief from an ever-increasing burden of problems and needs as folkways and mores lose their control and informal education fails to achieve essential objectives."<sup>17</sup> With many children coming from underprivileged homes, it has been observed that "In this uncertain world . . . school, even more than home, is the constant factor . . . the refuge for every child, for those with sympathetic and understanding parents, and for those without them."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Lerrigo and Southard, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> Haskell M. Miller, "Family Life Education in Schools and Colleges," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, December 1956, p. 173.

<sup>18</sup> Strain and Eggert, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

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### ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCHES TOWARD SEX EDUCATION

Training of young people in sex ethics has long been a concern of organized religion. Nearly all of the leading denominations have taken steps in recent decades to set up formal educational or guidance facilities in Christian family living. This often means a considerable amount of education in proper sex behavior for young church members.

Attitudes of the various religious bodies toward sex education in the secular framework of the public schools vary according to their liberal or conservative bent. A common hope is that sex education, whatever its source, will contribute to the cultivation of sound moral attitudes. Churches often participate in development of over-all principles to govern sex teaching in the schools. The Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, insists that sex education be given children as a form of religious instruction. Catholic children must learn the Catholic interpretation of the various manifestations of sex. Thus Catholics never can agree to sex instruction by a secular institution.

Catholic bishops of the United States, concluding a meeting in Washington in 1950, issued a statement to remind Catholic parents that it was their duty to instruct their children in sex matters. They protested "in the strongest possible terms against the introduction of sex education into the schools."

Catholic principles of sex education have been extensively propounded by recent popes. They have been particularly concerned about "naturalism" in sex education which "exaggerates beyond all measure the importance and scope of the sexual element in life."<sup>19</sup> A priest working in the National Catholic Welfare Conference has explained "why we, as Catholics, must oppose so much of the 'sex education' that is proposed for public schools."

Such information is given on the assumption that human nature is completely good without any help from God and that instruction or information can never be harmful. Some educators believe that once young people know all about the physiology and the emotional content of sexual relations, and also the danger of venereal disease, they will live chaste lives. Experience proves over and over again that this simply is not true.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Pius XII as quoted by Henry V. Sattler, *Parents, Children and the Facts of Life* (Image Book edition, 1957), p. 39.

<sup>20</sup> Sattler, *op. cit.*, p. 76. The author notes, however, that non-Catholic thinkers on this subject are coming around to a broader concept of sex education than the giving of mere facts.

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Catholic parochial schools prepare their pupils for a way of life which places great value on the family as the instrument of divine will. A considerable amount of attention accordingly is paid to the roles of men and women in family living. Education in the physiological details of sex is considered within the province of the home, but Catholic parents are given detailed guidance on what information they shall impart to their children and on how and when they shall do so. Catholic clergy and teachers are expected to be fully versed in the subject, so that they will be equipped to offer help and guidance as occasion arises. It is a rule that intimate sex facts, or discussion of personal sex problems, must always be dealt with in private interviews.

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### **Manner of Teaching Sex in Public Schools**

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SEX EDUCATION in public schools today may mean anything from a full-scale development of family life training to a single lecture to prepare boys or girls for the physical manifestations of approaching puberty. A movie or two on human reproduction may be the sum of one school's sex education, while another may skip all physiological aspects of sex but give courses on the etiquette of dating and courtship. Some school systems confine sex education to the senior high.

The pace-setters in the field maintain a continuous flow of family life training, including various forms of sex education, from the earliest grades. The plan proposed by the special committee in the District of Columbia indicates the direction in which the schools are now moving. The plan calls for sex teaching at all levels, from kindergarten through 12th grade, under the general topic headings of growth and development, reproduction, care of the body, moral standards, and family living. Specifically, the instruction in grades 4-9 would cover reproduction in plant and animal life; in grades 7-12, human reproduction; in grades 6-12, care of particular bodily organs; in grades 8-12, venereal diseases. In addition, attention would be directed in grades 4-12 to moral standards; in grades 7-12 to questions raised by boy and girl friendships and dating and petting; in grades 10-12 to preparation for

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courtship and marriage; and in grades 9-12 to community responsibility.

### EXTENT OF SEX INSTRUCTION IN ELEMENTARY GRADES

Sex education is usually thought of as a matter which concerns only high schools, but experience has been that when the subject is introduced gradually in the primary grades, it is likely to be accepted by pupils later with less self-consciousness. The book, *Framework for Family Life Education*, describes sex education in the earliest primary grades as incidental to other school activities. The teacher gives no formal instruction on sex but is alert to opportunities to guide the spontaneous interests of the children, and answer their questions, in a way that will cultivate wholesome attitudes toward sex.

The upper elementary grades include the age group which has a lively curiosity about sex. Many children in this group obtain a considerable amount of sex information, not all of it sound, long before their parents take them aside to explain the "facts of life." The ideal time for teaching children about the human body and for showing films illustrating the biological rudiments of sex is considered to be when the boys and girls are in grades 4-7. Leaders in family life education warn, however, that such films never should be shown to children unless a skilled teacher is on hand to interpret the material.

### SEPARATE TEACHING OF BOYS AND GIRLS IN JUNIOR HIGH

Sex education really comes into its own when the youngster reaches junior high. By this time he not only has acquired a fair smattering of knowledge about sex but also has a consuming desire to learn more, for he is beginning to suffer the first pangs of a few sex problems himself. The school accepts the teen-ager's strong interest in sex as a natural phenomenon and tries to give him help in coping with it. "Incidental teaching" is not enough now; specific studies are accordingly introduced.

Sex education at this stage consists principally of instruction in physical growth changes and the physiological manifestations of sex. Presentation of this material provides an opportunity to discuss such subjects as sex attraction, when girls and boys should begin dating, how to behave on a date, and so on. The children are prepared for the signs of puberty and encouraged to bring forward



questions about their physical or emotional development which may be troubling them. Instruction of this kind is customarily given to boys and girls in separate groups.

Anyone who recalls his own developing years, his self-consciousness and shyness about all sorts of new feelings and bodily changes cannot possibly be in doubt about segregation of boys and girls at this period of their sex education. In addition, the actual hygiene of the bodily changes has different requirements for each. . . . Moreover, this junior high school period is the one where . . . modesty is developing spontaneously and is one of the protective attributes to cherish.<sup>21</sup>

Keeping boys and girls apart for this instruction presents no problem, for the sex subjects usually are introduced in physical education or home economics classes where the sexes are traditionally separated.

#### QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED BY SENIOR HIGH STUDENTS

Sex education in senior high school is ordinarily meshed into marriage preparation courses. Growth in the number of engaged or even married high school seniors has led to incorporation of marriage courses—formerly limited to the college curriculum—into study schedules of the last two years of high school. Frequently the classes, or meetings, include pupils of both sexes and the discussion covers not so much elementary biological facts as questions of human relations. The advantages of long or short engagements, or of early marriage, and matters pertaining to the behavior of engaged couples are typical subjects.

Many teachers let the pupils set the direction of the discussion by asking questions. In some cases the questions are submitted anonymously in writing. In a British experiment with this form of sex instruction the leader unearthed deep uncertainty and worry in a group of late teen-agers who had been considered relatively sophisticated. The commonest questions were about masturbation ("Is it dangerous . . . weakening . . . normal?") and sexual freedom ("How do we know we will be suited if we don't try out first?"). Questions ranged from "requests for simple factual information to heart-searching emotional enquiries."<sup>22</sup>

A study of family life education reported the following among typical questions of students: "Why am I flat-chested?" "Is there a [moral] difference between talking

<sup>21</sup> Strain and Eggert, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>22</sup> H. Edleston, *Problems of Adolescents* (1956), pp. 42-75.



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about sex and actual sex experimentation?" "How do you know it's love?" "When do boys and girls usually reach full physical growth?"<sup>23</sup>

### NEED TO TRAIN TEACHERS IN METHODS OF SEX EDUCATION

A big obstacle to expansion of sex education is lack of teachers prepared, by both training and disposition, to teach the subject. Interested agencies accordingly are directing into teacher training whatever funds are available for promotion of sex education. It is generally felt that if the teacher training institutes can be won over, half the battle will be gained. There is some indication that a trend in that direction is in the making. A survey three years ago found that nearly half of the accredited teacher education institutions were offering special courses to prepare future teachers to deal with dating, marriage, social hygiene, and other family life education subjects.<sup>24</sup> A new set of certification standards established by the Tennessee Board of Education in 1953, requiring nine of a teacher's 60 quarters of training in general education to be in the field of health, personal development, or home and family living, may have been a straw in the wind.

A Development Center Project in Family Life Education, initiated in Oregon in 1951 under a private grant, provided for in-service training of teachers in three communities and developed new material and guidance for use of teacher training institutions. The American Social Hygiene Association since 1953 has used foundation grants to develop in-service training of teachers in three regions embracing 15 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>25</sup> The procedure has been to select an outstanding educator in each region to organize the project, form committees of specialists and consultants, and enlist community support.

Projects of this kind make clear the fact that creation of a strong teaching staff to provide full-fledged sex education in the schools is no easy job. Ingrained attitudes of teachers are not easily changed by a few weeks of study at a summer workshop. The Oregon project leaders reported

<sup>23</sup> American Social Hygiene Association, Report of the Midwest Project on In-Service Education of Teachers, *Strengthening Family Life Education in Our Schools* (1955), pp. 81-169.

<sup>24</sup> Arthur H. Glogau, "A Survey of Freshman Orientation Courses in Teacher Education," *The Journal of Teacher Education*, December 1954; p. 315.

<sup>25</sup> Midwest project (Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota); Central Atlantic project (Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, District of Columbia), and New England project.

some teachers "totally unable to imagine themselves" leading discussions or answering questions on sex. Some were persuaded of the need for sex education but never acquired confidence about teaching it. For others, "the awareness of what they were letting themselves in for was actually frightening." The leaders concluded that "This incapacity to deal with vital human relationships is, unfortunately, a feature of our culture . . . found in all communities, and as characteristic of homes and church groups, we suspect, as it is of schools."<sup>26</sup>

Theoretically, if one generation of young people could be properly educated and conditioned, formal sex education in the schools would no longer be necessary. The big question, however, is how to get the corps of qualified teachers who would first be needed to prepare the parents of the future to give their children wholesome and adequate training in sex.

<sup>26</sup> Avery and Kirkendall, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

